Employment Tax e-file System
94x XML Assurance Testing Process

Software Developers (SWDs) (to participate in the IRS e-file Program) need to submit a (new or revised) e-file application through e-Services to obtain a test ETIN (Electronic Transmitter Identification Number) and password. The SWD will need to return the signed receipt for the password, following the instructions in the password letter.

The ETIN is a 5 digit unique identification number assigned by the e-help Desk to each Authorized IRS e-file Provider (Transmitter, and Software Developer), who will transmit returns directly to IRS or who develops software for our e-file Programs.

SWDs should utilize the 94x XML Developers' Forum website to view the most current information on the 94x XML Programs, to include the latest Schemas, Schema Mapping Documents, and Publication 3823 (Users Guide).

The website is located at:
97753(Attach this article #)

94x XML Assurance Testing Process is for:

• 94x PIN Registration

• 94x Return Filing

Software Developers must create their own test scenarios to use when completing the 94x XML Assurance Testing Process.

SWDs must submit at least 5 self prepared test scenarios for each return type to be filed, having a transmission that generates a clean acknowledgement file with zero reject errors, before being approved to participate in the 94x XML e-file Programs. (See the 'Pass/Fail Criteria' below)

Processing Steps:

For Software Developers (SWDs)

1) SWDs who provide commercial software to online filers must create software that will transmit a PIN registration in the XML format, using the developed software. Once a successful transmission for a PIN registration is received by the IRS, the software can be approved.

SWDs will also need to test return data by contacting the e-help Desk and by following steps 2 - 7 below.

2) SWD should conduct Assurance Testing using return data created following the most current information on the 94x XML Programs, which include the latest Schemas, Schema Mapping Documents, and Publication 3823 (Users Guide). These documents are found on the 94x XML Developers' Forum website.

SWD should first conduct a pre-validation of the XML data in their test scenarios by using a parser, such as XML SPY, and run it against the most current XML schemas. This will help to identify most validation errors prior to sending their transmission files to the IRS.

A few validations that relate to confidential taxpayer data, such as EIN, PIN, EFIN etc, can only be validated by the production system and should not be used in the test environment; when sending in live returns.

SWDs should test each return type in the 940/941/944 family that they intend to market or file live once they pass assurance testing.

3) The SWD should call (866-255-0654) the IRS e-help Desk to state that they are ready to test. The e-help Assistor will assign the SWD a "Software ID Number" and ensure their status is reflected as "Testing" and is available to provide direction throughout the testing process to the SWD.

4) Once the SWD have corrected all of their errors from the pre-validation test in step 2, the SWD will then be enabled to use their test ETIN and password to transmit their test return files.

5) Once the test return files have been processed through EMS and the 94x XML System, the IRS will create and send either an XML Acknowledgement file (ACK) or Negative Acknowledgment (NAK) file that the SWDs will pick up when they login to the EMS system.

6) If all returns within the transmission are not accepted, then the SWDs will make the changes noted in the ACK/NAK file to correct the errors. They will then re-run the new file through the schema and XML parser, and retransmit their corrected test return file to TCC. (Steps 2-4 will be repeated)

7) If all returns are accepted with zero reject errors and the SWD can read their ACK file, then the e-help Desk Assistors will advise the SWD that their software is approved ("Accepted" status). The approved software can then be marketed.

Note: If already a SWD/Transmitter, a SWD ETIN will be issued and remain in test status. The Transmitter ETIN issued will be used for "Production" only.

If just a SWD and wish to become a Transmitter, then update the e-file application through e-Services to add the provider option of Transmitter, and a Production ETIN will be automatically issued for your use when filing returns.

For Third Party Transmitters (TPTs)

1) To participate in the IRS e-file Program, TPTs need to submit a (new or revised) e-file application through e-Services to obtain a test ETIN and password.

2) The TPT will call (1-866-255-0654) the IRS e-help Desk, indicating that they will be using an IRS "Accepted" software product and need to conduct a communications test. The e-help Assistor is available to provide direction throughout the testing process to the TPT.

3) If all returns are accepted with zero reject errors and the TPT can read their ACK file, the e-help Desk Assistor will update their 94x Transmitter Form Type into "Production", allowing them to transmit live return data.

Pass/Fail Criteria

FOR PIN REGISTRATION:

1. The SWD must successfully transmit 5 test PIN Registrations in the XML format to the e-help Desk.

2. At least one of these test transmissions must contain and ampersand (&) in the company name line.

FOR RETURN PROCESSING:

1. Successfully connect to the EMS system when initiating the transmission of a test file.

2. Successfully transmit the following employment tax return types: 944, 941, 941 Schedule B, Schedule D, Schedule R, 941 PR, 941 SS, 940, 940 PR, Payment record, and PIN registration.

Note: If the SWD is not planning to transmit/file certain return types in a production mode, they are exempt from testing them.

3. Successfully connect to the EMS system and retrieve their Acknowledgement file.

4. Once they have successfully completed the steps above, they will have passed Assurance Testing. They will now be allowed to transmit live return data in a production mode.

Note: Successfully is defined as not receiving any error rejects from any test Transmissions or from the e-help Desk review.